THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) A scheme of pollution abatement of Yamuna, called the Yamuna Action Plan has been approved by the Government.

(b) The feasibility report referred to in the question has been prepared by the Delhi Development Authority under the title "Planning of River Yamuna Bed". This report, inter-alia, covers the following:

(i) Pollution control of river through environmental improvement and treatment of sewage.

(ii) Channelisation of river.

(iii) Reclamation of land on the river bed for development activities.

(iv) Navigation facilities across the river.

Of these, the pollution control aspects are covered under the Yamuna Action Plan.

(c) The Overseas Economic Co-operation Fund of Japan is providing only financial assistance and has approved a soft loan of Yen 17.77 Billion (equivalent to Rs. 401 crore) for part financing the Yamuna Action Plan.

(d) No suggestion from the Environmental Protection Agency of USA or Lemna Corporation bas been received by the Government in this regard.

Cleaning of the Dal Lake

3865. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the J&K Government have taken some fresh steps to clean up the Dal Lake; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) The measures taken by the J&K Government for cleaning up of Dal Lake include the following:

(i) Soil conservation measures in the lake catchment area.

(ii) Low cost sanitation along peripheral areas.

(iii) Selective deweeding.

(iv) Sewerage and drainage construction work in Habak and Hazaratbal areas.

(v) Improvement of Nallah Amir Khan.

(vi) Development of plots for rehabilitation of dislocated families.

(vii) Construction of foreshore roads.

(viii) Replanning and sewage disposal from houseboats.

(ix) Shifting of leper asylum from Bahra Ara and its rehabilitation at Khonmoh.

(x) Construction of settling basin on Telbal Nallah.

(xi) Setting up of a laboratory for water quality monitoring.

(xii) Improvements of navigational routes.

In addition to the above measures the State Government has recently prepared a scheme for diversion of sewage entering the lake by laying down sewers along the lake periphery.

Centre's Plan to clean up Rivers

3866. DR. RAMENDRA KUMAR YADAV "RAVI": Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are planning to clean up 17 rivers of the country as reported in the Sunday Dated 6th June, 1993 under caption "Centre Plan to clean up Rivers".

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what is the reaction of Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) to (c) A programme for pollution abatment of 14 grossly polluted stretches in 9 rivers and 14 less polluted stretches in another 8 rivers of the country is under consideration of the Government. The details in this are being worked out.

Facilities to Tribal People in Forest Areas

3867. SHRI RAM RATAN RAM: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what facilities Government have provided to the tribal people residing in forests areas;

(b) whether there is any plan/scheme to give forest contract to the tribal people; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Recognising the symbiotic relationship between forests and the tribals, the National Forest Policy of 1988 has laid adequate emphasis on the protection of tribal interests through a number of policy directives which include safeguarding of customary rights, concessions enjoyed by the people; association of tribal people in the protection, regeneration and development of forests as well as to provide them with gainful employment; replacement of forest contractors by institutions such as tribal co-operatives, labour co-operatives, government corporations etc; protection, regeneration and optimum collection of Minor Forest Produce; *family oriented schemes for improving the* status of the tribal beneficiaries; undertaking integrated area development programmes etc. In pursuance of these policy directives both the Central Government and State Governments have initiated activities and programmes aimed at achieving the above mentioned policy objectives.

(b) In pursuance of the policy directive regarding replacement of contractors by institutions some States have taken steps to execute forestry works like collection, processing and marketing of Minor Forest Produce, logging etc. through Tribal Co-operative Societies/Tribal Development Corporations.

(c) Do not arise.

Consumption of Wood in the Country

3868. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a major source of consumption of wood in the country is traditional, religious and sentimental rituals;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the source of wood in the country is gradually diminishing; and

(c) if so, what steps Government propose to take to create mass awareness among the masses of the country activities and to promote use of latest techniques in the traditional and sentimental ritual?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Biotic pressure and requirement of wood is increasing.

(c) Various steps taken to create mass awareness for reduction of use of wood are:—

(i) Use of media and extension services to create awareness about benefits of forests conservation, use of improved smokeless Chullas, Solar Cookers, improved Crematoria and other non-conventional sources of energy.

(ii) Involvement of local people in preparation of micro-plan for afforestation and promotion of wood conservation and wood substitution measures.

(iii) Forest personnels and beneficiaries of Social Forestry Programme are being imparted training for raising of nurseries, plantations and forest protection under various schemes.

Rajasthan Me Khanan Mafia Ke Loot-Khasot

3869 SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR YADAV "RAVI": Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the government has been drawn to the news items published in Hindi Blitz dated 12th June, 1993 under the caption Rajasthan Me Khanan Mafia Ke Loot-Khasot;

(b) if so, the details thereof, and

(c) what is the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) to (c) The news item mentioned in the question deals with the alleged support of a former Chief Minister of Rajasthan to mine owners who exploit the minerals causing environmental damage. According to the news item the former Chief Minister is alleged to have said that the notification issued by Government of India is an international conspiracy against exploitation of minerals, the notification would result in unemployment, loss of revenue etc.

It also attributes to one environmental scientist opinion that figures quoted by some promining sources in respect of large scale employment given to labourers as a result of liberally granted mining leases are highly exaggerated and that leases in the Aravalli Ranges are a great danger to the forest cover,